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EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BRUSSELS

OFFICE OF THE AMBASSADOR

January 31, 1973

PERSONAL

Dear Vernon:

May I thank you for a very pleasant, stimulating and cheerful luncheon. I departed fortified in body and refreshed in spirit.

I enclose a random harvest of the local press, presented to me on the day I returned to this post. I deem it quite à propos of our discussion. It should be noted that the Gazet van Antwerpen, De Standaard, La Libre Belgique, and Le Soir range between conservative and middle-of-the-road, and that these dailies have been, in the past, quite friendly to us. It seems that these excerpts illustrate quite well my thesis, namely, that the "image" we project is, to say the least, cloudy and is likely to remain that way as long as we do not take vigorous action towards refurbishing it. I suspect that the situation is not too dissimilar in the countries next door.

As you know, I hold firmly with the concept of Atlantic partnership and its transcendent importance to us in our foreign and security policies. I believe that our best minds agree with this proposition. In order to create a more mature and viable partnership between our European allies and us, and to pursue, together with Europe, an effective diplomacy dealing with the fundamental issues of European security, we need to insure, in this endeavor, the support of European public opinion. Of course, we still command an immense reservoir of goodwill in Europe; but it seems that the levers of European public opinion are not in our hands and that lately our efforts to put our case before the European publics have not been crowned by a great deal of success. As I see it from here, we need to launch major programs in order to improve the situation.

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To some extent, facts do speak for themselves: as the achievements of this Administration will become fully manifest and as the great strength of our country will be revealed by our performance, European public opinion cannot help but take note. Yet, in this highly competitive business of "winning the hearts and minds of peoples", purposeful, organized initiatives are indispensable. Our competitors are fully aware of the stakes and do their utmost to manipulate the facts. In brief, we cannot leave the run of the forum to others.

With the kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,



Robert Strausz-Hupé
Ambassador

Enclosure

Lt. General Vernon A. Walters
Deputy Director
Central Intelligence Agency
McLean, Virginia 22101

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Media Report for Monday, January 29, 1973

Belgian media gives extensive coverage to signing of ceasefire accords and reported violations of the agreement. Sample headlines:

"Despite Signing of Paris Accords Fighting Continues
(Gazet Van Antwerpen)

"Guns Not Silent in South Vietnam"
(Volksgazet)

"Ceasefire Reached Only in Paris"
(Volk, Nieuwe Gids)

Flemish Commentary:

Editorial in Gazet Van Antwerpen entitled "Drole de Paix" writes that "both parties are militarily strong, and temptation of trial of strength with arms will be big. Let us hope that Vietnam people will draw moral strength from past misery to prevent this."

Editorial in Volksgazet entitled "President Thieu Does Not Want Peace" comments that "as long as Thieu can maintain himself in Saigon truce will be delicate and real peace in reunified Vietnam will not be for tomorrow." Paper, however, writes that "those who, like Thieu, would prefer to continue war, will now meet with serious psychological handicap with own people and world. We have impression that Nixon will not lightly start everything over again only because Thieu is asking it. Nixon wants enter second term as 'peace maker'".

Editorial in Laatste Nieuws entitled "A Paper Peace?". Editorial adds that "peace is like a Vietnamese cherry tree. It is beautiful, but it has no roots."

Editorial in De Standaard concludes that "lesson of Vietnam is that biggest power in world, while using all available military means except nuclear weapons, has not succeeded in forcing social revolutionary adversary on knees. It is clear that social revolutionaries in Southeast Asia had no other choice but the path they have taken so far. It is equally clear that revolutionaries in other parts of world will be faced with same choice as long as the U.S. does not change course and as long as it continues to identify freedom and independence with the maintenance of economic exploitation structures."

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French Commentary:

President Paul Struye, writing in La Libre Belgique, says that "in fact situation remains as a whole what it was in 1954 with that circumstance, fortunate for U.S., that North Vietnam has settled down in South and that Saigon government is not only confronted with Hanoi government but also with revolutionary government. Is it to bring about that result that it was necessary to sacrifice 50,000 young Americans?"

Alfred Brochard writes in Le Soir that "morally, U.S. doesn't have more reasons to rejoice at having yielded to Thieu's demands because, as it withdraws, it leaves behind government at grips with same insurrection and same foreign aid as against which it intervened. If it had stuck to October agreements it could have pretended that Vietnamese government it would have contributed to put on its feet was representative of feelings of majority of population and that free elections would soon have confirmed it. Now, the optimists think that there will be elections which will not be free, each power 'manufacturing' them in areas under their control. Pessimists believe that there won't be any elections at all."

Robert Falony in Saturday's Le Peuple writes that "Henry Kissinger as of 1969 defined very well key of that war: 'guerillas win so long as they are not defeated; regular army fails as long as it does not win'. Thus, if it is true that none of the sides has reached its war objectives, it is not true that this is a 'draw' peace such as one which ended Korean war."

RTB-TV (George Konen) and Radio (Bachelier) covered Paris signing ceremonies live.